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Life courses of highly skilled Indian migrants in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom

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**Life courses of highly skilled
Indian migrants in the
Netherlands and the United Kingdom**

Anu Kõu

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university of
 groningen

Life courses of highly skilled Indian migrants in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom

PhD thesis

to obtain the degree of PhD at the
 University of Groningen
 on the authority of the
 Rector Magnificus Prof. E. Sterken
 and in accordance with
 the decision by the College of Deans.

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by

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Preface

The preface of a book on the life courses of highly skilled migrants probably demands an introduction to my life course as a highly skilled migrant. Rather than focusing on my parallel life course careers and their interdependencies, I would like to reflect on the linked lives in this stage of my life course. Just as central as linked lives are in the life course approach and in this dissertation, they have been crucial for me during the writing of this book. The support, opinions and advice from my professionally and socially linked lives have shaped both this dissertation and my life course decisions. I felt particularly thankful for being surrounded by so many caring people when I had to run the extra miles after I had already finished a PhD marathon, all that support really kept me going.

First, I would like to thank my supervisors. It has not always been easy for you either to keep me on track during those long years, but I am glad we have reached the end point together. Leo, I appreciate how you relate everything to the wider picture. Thank you for reminding me to not overcomplicate things and to not have unrealistic expectations for the dissertation and for myself. Claartje, although you officially became my co-promotor in the very end of my PhD trajectory, you have been involved in the background throughout the process, thank you for that. I have learned a lot from your critical thinking, eye for the detail, pragmatic attitude, and thorough feedback. Ajay, it has been a privilege to have a highly skilled Indian migrant in the Netherlands as a supervisor of this dissertation; your theoretical knowledge and first-hand emic view have been very valuable. It was good to know your office door was always open for formal and informal chats, during good times and not so good times.

Equally importantly, I am grateful to the research participants for sharing their life stories with me. I think back of the fieldwork as the most inspiring and rewarding part of the PhD process.

Jouke, the first article benefited from your economic geographer's perspective, thanks for your input.

I was hosted by the Centre for Population Change at the University of Southampton during my fieldwork in the UK, my thanks for the opportunity and support go to all people involved. Sabu, your big smile and helpfulness gave me confidence that everything will work out. Hildah, our lively discussions on European and African norms and values were eye-opening and amusing. Panos and Eva, thanks for introducing the British (night life) culture to me, I guess we would all pass the integration test now. Devyanee, my stay in Southampton would not have been the same without you, I value our friendship a lot.

During the years I have spent at the Population Research Centre, I have shared the office and hallway, talks and walks, the joys and frustrations of doing a PhD with many colleagues who have played an important role in writing this book. Karen, you hold a special place for me as the first PRCer I got to know, thanks for the *gezelligheid* in our

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I also wish to thank the people from the academic community outside my home and host institutes who have influenced me as a researcher. My thanks are due to fellow demographers from the Estonian Institute for Population Studies for their interest in my research and for involving me in their academic activities. The depth and breadth of your seminars are impressive, as is the hard work you have put into developing the institute. Members of the Migration and Culture Research Network in Groningen, thanks for the fruitful paper discussions. Emma, writing and publishing an article with you was a very useful experience for me.

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Aitäh!

Anu

September 2016, Pihlta

Table of contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Overview of the empirical chapters | 11 |
| 1. Introduction | 13 |
| 1.1 High-skilled migration | 14 |
| 1.2 Life course approach | 17 |
| 1.3 Research questions, data and thesis outline | 19 |
| 2. A life course approach to high-skilled migration: Lived experiences of Indians in the Netherlands | 23 |
| 2.1 Introduction | 25 |
| 2.2 High-skilled migration: concepts and definitions | 26 |
| 2.3 Studying high-skilled migration from the life course perspective | 28 |
| 2.4 Data and methods | 31 |
| 2.5 Findings | 32 |
| 2.6 Conclusion | 39 |
| 3. 'Movement is a constant feature in my life': Contextualising migration processes of highly skilled Indians | 41 |
| 3.1 Introduction | 43 |
| 3.2 Migration process: background | 44 |
| 3.3 Migration of high-skilled Indians to the Netherlands and the UK | 46 |
| 3.4 Research approach | 48 |
| 3.5 Findings: migration paths of high-skilled Indian migrants in the Netherlands and the UK | 50 |
| 3.6 Discussion and conclusion: paths in the migration process | 61 |
| 4. 'For the sake of family and future': The linked lives of highly skilled Indian migrants | 63 |
| 4.1 Introduction | 65 |
| 4.2 Linked lives and migration | 67 |
| 4.3 Linked lives in India | 69 |
| 4.4 Data and methods | 71 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| 4.5 Findings | 72 |
| 4.6 Conclusion | 80 |
| 5. ‘Some people expect women should always be dependent’: Indian women’s experiences as highly skilled migrants | 83 |
| 5.1 Introduction | 85 |
| 5.2 Background | 86 |
| 5.3 Data and methods | 89 |
| 5.4 Findings: gender norms as experienced in the life stories of high-skilled female Indian migrants | 90 |
| 5.5 Conclusion | 101 |
| 6. Conclusions | 105 |
| 6.1 Introduction | 106 |
| 6.2 Summary of the main findings | 106 |
| 6.3 Discussion and contributions of this research | 110 |
| 6.4 Implications for policy | 116 |
| 6.5 Limitations of this study and suggestions for further research | 119 |
| Samenvatting | 123 |
| References | 131 |

Overview of the empirical chapters

The chapters included in this PhD dissertation are modified versions of the following publications and manuscripts:

Chapter 2

Kōu, A., Van Wissen, L.J.G., Van Dijk, J., and Bailey, A. 2015. A life course approach to high-skilled migration: Lived experiences of Indians in the Netherlands. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 41 (10), 1644–1663.

Chapter 3

Kōu, A., and Bailey, A. 2014. ‘Movement is a constant feature in my life’: Contextualising migration processes of highly skilled Indians. *Geoforum* 52, 113–122.

Chapter 4

Kōu, A., Bailey, A., Mulder, C.H., and Van Wissen, L.J.G. 2013. ‘For the sake of the family and the future’: The linked lives of highly skilled Indian migrants in the Netherlands and United Kingdom. International Conference on Population Geographies, 25–28 June 2013, Groningen.

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Chapter 5

Kōu, A., and Bailey, A. 2015. ‘Some people expect women should always be dependent’: Indian women’s experiences as highly skilled migrants. Workshop ‘Migration, development and citizenship: Examining the nexus between the arrangement of migrant lives and (global/national) political and economic regimes’, 25–26 June 2015, Amsterdam.

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